

## CLAIMS

1           1.    An apparatus for protecting a refrigeration line  
2           against crimping, the apparatus comprising:

3           a)    a length of solid hollow tubing, with a first end  
4           of the tubing extending into an inner space of a building  
5           wall, and a second end of the tubing extending out of the  
6           exterior of the building wall;

7           b)    a length of flexible refrigerant line running  
8           which extends through the building wall space through an  
9           opening in the tubing and extends out from an outer end of  
10          the tube;

11          c)    an etched line along the wall portion of the  
12          tube, positioned at a point so that the etched line may  
13          serve as a means for cutting an exterior portion of the  
14          tube from the tube body in the event the refrigerant line  
15          is crimped so as to expose a greater portion of uncrimped  
16          refrigerant line but may be cut and spliced as needed.

1           2.    The apparatus in claim 1, wherein the inflexible  
2           hollow tubing comprises PVC pipe.

1           3.    The apparatus in claim 1, wherein the first end  
2           of the tubing further comprises an upper wall portion  
3           cutaway for allowing the refrigerant line to enter the  
4           tubing from the top.

1           4.    The apparatus in claim 1, wherein the tubing is  
2           positioned adjacent a stud within the inner building wall  
3           space.

1           5.    An apparatus for protecting a refrigeration line  
2           extending from the exterior wall of a building against  
3           crimping, the apparatus comprising:

4           a)    a length of inflexible hollow tubing, with a  
5           first end of the tubing extending into an inner space of a

6 building wall, and a second end of the tubing extending out  
7 of the exterior of the building wall;

8 b) the first end of the tubing having a cutaway in  
9 an upper wall portion;

10 c) a length of flexible refrigerant line positioned  
11 in the building wall space, and extending downward, the  
12 refrigerant line entering the tubing through the cutaway in  
13 the upper wall portion of the tubing, and extending out  
14 from the second end of the tubing;

15 c) an etched line along the wall portion of the  
16 tubing adjacent the second end, so that the etched line may  
17 serve as a means for removing an exterior portion of the  
18 tube along the etched line in the event the refrigerant  
19 line is crimped so as to expose a greater portion of  
20 uncrimped refrigerant line that may be cut and spliced as  
21 needed;

22 d) a repair coupling positioned over the uncrimped  
23 portion of the line, so that a second refrigerant line may  
24 be engaged by the coupling to define the splice in the  
25 line.

1 6. The apparatus in claim 5, wherein the tubing is  
2 positioned through an opening in the exterior building wall  
3 adjacent a vertical stud member.

1 7. The apparatus in claim 5, wherein the tubing  
2 would comprise PVC or some inflexible equivalent material.

1 8. The apparatus in claim 5, wherein the first end  
2 of the inflexible hollow tubing extending into the building  
3 space would further comprise an upper curved end for  
4 allowing a length of copper line to bend upward along the  
5 curved end to form a 90 degree bend without crimping the  
6 line.

7           9.    A method of repairing a refrigerant line after  
8    crimping, comprising the following steps:

9           a)    providing a soft, flexible refrigerant line  
10   extending through an opening in the exterior wall of a  
11   building;

12          b)    providing an inflexible protective hollow tube  
13   positioned within an opening of the exterior wall of a  
14   building, the protective tube having a first end extending  
15   within a wall space in the building and a second end  
16   extending exterior to the exterior wall of the building;

17          c)    threading the flexible refrigerant line through  
18   the protective hollow tube so that the refrigerant line  
19   extends exterior to the second end of the tube;

20          d)    providing an etched line in the wall of the  
21   protective hollow tube at a point between the building wall  
22   and the second end of the tube;

23          e)    receiving a crimp in the flexible refrigerant  
24   line at a point beyond the second end of the protective  
25   tube;

26          f)    cutting off and removing a portion of the  
27   protective tube along the etched line in the tube wall so  
28   as to expose a sufficient portion of the refrigerant line  
29   extending from the second end of the tube for splicing onto  
30   a new section of refrigerant line.

1           10.   The method in claim 9, further comprising the  
2   step of removing a portion of the upper wall of the  
3   protective tube adjacent the first end so as to allow the  
4   refrigerant line to be threaded into the protective tube  
5   from a point above the tube.

1           11.   The method in claim 9, further comprising the  
2   step of providing a collar around the splice in the  
3   refrigerant line so as to provide a secure splice in the  
4   line.